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NINE SONNETS WRITTEN AT OXFORD

Kennedy, L I

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

NINE
SONNETS
written at
OXFORD
CHRISTMAS
MDCCCXCV.
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NINE SONNETS WRITTEN AT OXFORD ❧ I: THE TOW-PATH

EURROW to furrow, oar to oar succeeds ❧ Each length away, more bright more exquisite ❧ The sister shells that hither, thither flit ❧ Strew the long stream like dropping maple-seeds ❧ A comrade on the marge now lags, now leads ❧ Who with short calls his pace doth intermit ❧ An angry Pan, afoot; but if he sit ❧ Auspicious Pan among the river reeds ❧

WEST of the glowing hay-ricks, (tawny-black ❧ Where waters by their warm escarpments run,) ❧ Two lovers, slowly crossed from Kennington ❧ Print in the early dew a married track ❧ And drain the aroma'd eve, and spend the sun ❧ Ere, in laborious health, the crews come back ❧ ❧ ❧ ❧ ❧ ❧

II: THE OLD DIAL OF CORPUS

ARDEN of hours and ages, here I dwell
Who saw young Keble pass, with sighing shook
For good unborn; and, towards a willow nook,
Pole, princely in the senate and the cell;
And doubting the near boom of Osney bell,
Turning on me that sweetly subtile look,
Erasmus, in his breast an Attic book:
Peacemakers all, their dreams to ashes fell.

AUGHT steadfast may I image nor attain
Save steadfast labour; futile must I grope
After my god, like him inconstant bright.
But sun and shade shall unto you remain
Alternately a vision and a hope,
Men, spirits! of Emmanuel your Light.

III: AD ANTIQUARIUM QUIDAM

MY gentle Aubrey, who in everything
Hadst of thy city's youth so lovely lust,
Yet never lineal to her towers august
Thy spirit could fix, or perfectly upbring,
Sleep, sleep. I ope, not unremembering,
Thy comely manuscript, and, interthrust,
Find delicate hueless leaves more sad than dust,
Three centuries unkissed of any spring.

FILLING a homesick page beneath a lime,
Thy mood beheld, as mine thy debtor's now,
The endless terraces of ended Time,
Vague in green twilight. Goodly was release
Into that past where these poor leaves and thou
Do freshen in the air of eldest peace.

IV: ON THE PRE-REFORMATION CHURCHES ABOUT OXFORD

MPERIAL Iffley, Cumnor bowered in green,
And Templar Sandford in the boatman's call,
And sweet-belled Appleton, and Marcham wall
That doth upon adoring ivies lean;
Meek Binsey; Dorchester where streams convene
Bidding on graves her solemn shadow fall;
Clear Cassington that soars perpetual;
Holton and Hampton, and ye towers between:

F one of all in your sad courts that come,
Belovèd and disparted! be your own,
Kin to the souls ye had, while time endures,
Known to each disinherited dumb stone
Home in the quarries of old Christendom,—
Ah, mark him: he will lay his cheek to yours.

V: ON THE SAME (CONTINUED)

S this the end? Is this the pilgrim's day
For dread, for dereliction, and for tears?
Rather, from grass and air and many spheres,
In prophecy his spirit sinks away;
And under English eaves, more still than they,
Far-off, incoming, wonderful, he hears
The long-arrested, the believing years
Carry the sea-wall! Shall he, sighing, say:

AREWELL to Faith, for she is dead at best
Who had such beauty?" or, with kisses lain
For witness on her darkened doors, go by
With a new psalm: "O banished light so nigh!
Of them was I, who bore thee and who blest;
Even here remember me when thou shalt reign."

VI: A DECEMBER WALK.

HITHERSOEVER cold and fair ye flow,
Calm tides of moonlit midnight, bear my mind!
Past pillared gates with leafy frost entwined,
And Merton in his stern tiara's glow,
And groves in bridal gossamers below
Saint Mary's armoured spire; and whence aligned
In altered eminence for dawn to find,
Sleep the droll Cæsars, hooded with the snow.

HITE sacraments of weather, shine on me,
And sift my footfall, and my fancy sift,
Lest either blemish an ensainted ground
Spread so with childhood. Here this hour, outbound,
On recollected wing all angels drift
Across new spheres of immortality.

VII: ROOKS IN NEW COLLEGE GARDEN

HRO' rosy cloud and over thorny towers,
Their wings with darkling autumn distance filled,
From Isis' valley border, hundred-hilled,
The rooks are crowding home as evening lowers:
Not for men only, and their musing hours,
By battled walls did gracious Wykeham build
These dewy spaces early sown and stilled,
These dearest inland melancholy bowers.

LEST birds! A book held open on the knee
Below, is all they know of Adam's blight:
With surer art the while, and simpler rite
They follow Truth in some monastic tree,
Where breathe against their docile breasts by night
The scholar's star, the star of sanctity.

VIII: A LAST VIEW

HERE down the glen,
across the shallow ford,
Stretches the open aisle
from scene to scene,
By halted horses silently
we lean,
Gazing enchanted from our steeper sward.
How yon low loving skies of April hoard
An hundred pinnacles, and how with sheen
Of spike and ball her languid clouds be-
tween,
Grey Oxford grandly rises riverward!

WEET, on those dim long-dedi-
cated walls,
Silver as rain the frugal sunshine
falls;
Slowly sad eyes resign them, bound afar.
Dear Beauty, dear Tradition, fare you
well:
And powers that aye aglow in you, impel
Our quickening spirits from the slime we
are.

IX: RETRIEVAL.

TARS in the bosom of thy triple tide,
June air and ivy on thy gracile stone,
O glory of the west, as thou wert sown
Be perfect: O miraculous, abide!
And still for greatness floating from thy side,
Eternal alchemist, upraise, enthrone
Some presence of salvation, later blown
From that same seed of fire which never died.

OR faith shall lack her solace, to behold
Staunch, to the morrow's hostile evil verge,
New points of light subdue disclosing spaces;
And round a beacon-spirit, stabile, old,
In radiant broad tumultuary surge
For ever, the young voices, the young faces.

These nine Sonnets written at Oxford by Louise Imogen Guiney and decorated by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue are privately issued for them and their friends and for Herbert Copeland and F. H. Day and their friends at Christmas MDCCCXCV the printing having been done at the University Press in Cambridge Massachusetts

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